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‘Hap’ Holly, Well Known Des Plainesite, Dies At 73

By Journal Staff

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Hap Holly of Des Plaines in a photo from 2012. (Journal file photo)

Alanson “Hap” P. Holly, a respected longtime resident of Des Plaines who was involved in numerous local causes and organizations — all while blind — died on Monday, Feb. 24. He was 73.

Hap, who was born in La Jolla, CA, on April 11, 1951, was well-known for his kindness and intelligence, serving as a leader of the Des Plaines Lions Club and the Des Plaines Toastmasters Club.

In addition, for much of his life he was a devoted amateur radio operator and organist. On many occasions, Holly performed at the then annual Journal & Topics Pizza Contest in Des Plaines.

He is survived by Stephanie Holly, his wife of 48 years. A memorial visitation for Holly will be held on Saturday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to noon at G.L. Hills Funeral Home, 745 Graceland Ave., Des Plaines.

Holly first arrived in Illinois to attend Principia College in Elsah, IL. He graduated in 1974 with a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology. He and Stephanie moved to Des Plaines in 1978.

Hap and Stephanie were also active members of the Des Plaines Emergency Management Agency. He published a blog for the amateur radio community named the RAIN Report. He was employed for many years as an audio engineer and monitor for Horizons for the Blind.

According to a column written by an amateur radio operator several years ago, Holly woke up one morning when he was 7 years old only to discover he had no sight. Both of his parents were also blind, but none of his siblings were. Friends have said that he considered blindness not a disability, but rather only a challenge that fine-tuned his other senses.

A feature movie about Hap and the challenges his parents faced was made and first aired in 1996 on CBS. Its name was “What Love Sees” starring Richard Thomas.